

Order of Worship for August 27, 2023

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

The Opening Hymn: “*Earth and All Stars*” – Hymn #817

Confession and Forgiveness p. 151 Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: But we will bless the LORD

C: from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!

P: As for Me, I have set My King

C: on Zion, My holy hill.

P: I will tell of the decree:

C: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

P: Praise the LORD, all nations!

C: Extol Him, all peoples!

P: For great is His steadfast love toward us,

C: and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: But we will bless the LORD

C: from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!

Kyrie: (*Lord, Have Mercy*) p. 152-3

Hymn of Praise: (*This Is the Feast*) p. 155

Salutation: p. 156

Prayer of the Day:

P: Almighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus, to be the way, the truth, and the life that we may boldly confess Him to be the Christ and steadfastly walk in the way that leads to life eternal; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Lesson: – Isaiah 51:1-6

R: “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless

him and multiply him. For the LORD comforts Zion; He comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. “Give attention to Me, My people, and give ear to Me, My nation; for a law will go out from Me, and I will set My justice for a light to the peoples. My righteousness draws near, My salvation has gone out, and My arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for Me, and for My arm they wait. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will never be dismayed.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: – Romans 11:33-12:8

R: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor? Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?” For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. ... I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse p. 156

Holy Gospel: – Matthew 16:13-20

P: The Holy Gospel according to St Matthew, the 16th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)

P: Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of

the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then He strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)**

Children’s Message: (8:30 AM)

Sermon Hymn: “*Built on the Rock*” – **Hymn 645**

Sermon: “*Who Is Jesus?*” – **Matthew 16:13-20**

Who is Jesus? Like so many questions, it depends on who you ask. Almost everyone in our time has an opinion about Jesus, though far too often that opinion seems to come from the failures of those who claim to be his followers.

It was no different when Jesus walked among us. The opinions of His contemporaries cover the entire spectrum of love and hate, honor and humiliation. Listen to some of the names Jesus was called during His short, three-year period of ministry. He was labeled the "Lamb of God," the "carpenter's Son." He was called a teacher, a devil, a deceiver, a sinner, the Savior. He was considered to be a wine drinker, possessed by the devil, a blasphemer, an insurrectionist, and the Christ the Son of the living God.

Who is Jesus? That’s the question asked of the disciples in today’s Gospel lesson. Jesus first asks his disciples who others say he is. Jesus had taken His closest followers to the city of Caesarea Philippi—the headquarters of the Roman procurators who ruled, and the troops who enforced that rule—in Judea. Caesarea Philippi was not a comfortable location for God-fearing men who considered themselves to be direct descendants of father Abraham. Everything they had been taught to avoid, everything they were supposed to abhor, had a good representation in Caesarea Philippi. This was a party town, a heathen town, a place that boasted fourteen temples to Baal, one for Caesar, and a cave which the locals proudly pointed out to tourists as being the birthplace of the Greek god of nature: Pan.

It is here, far from the safe and familiar, surrounded by false gods, that Jesus asks, "What do people say about Me? Who do they say I am?" He wants to know the general feeling of the people around him, and he wants to know if the disciples have been paying attention to what’s going on around them. You can almost hear the disciples, who like school children that for once are sure they know the right answer, eagerly reply: "Some say You're Elijah!" Another disciple declares, "I've heard some say You're Jeremiah!" and a third throws in, "Or one of God's prophets."

They give the answers they’ve heard. The people are putting Jesus in line with the prophets they know. Jesus had picked up John’s message of preaching repentance and proclaiming the kingdom of God, fulfilling the prophecies of God’s messenger coming. Elijah never died, but instead was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot. When we finished looking at Malachi, the last of the Minor Prophets, his book ends with the promise that Elijah must return before the

day of the Lord, and to this day an empty place is left at Passover meals as Jews wait for Elijah to return. Other prophets had come and gone, calling the people to repent and return to God, and Jesus certainly fit into their mold. But that's it. The crowds, Jesus' friends, and even Jesus' enemies had some ideas about who he was, but couldn't say for certain who he was.

Then Jesus comes to the crux of the discussion. Who do they say that he is? Who do you say that I am, Peter, James, John, and the rest? After walking and talking with me, after watching miracle after miracle happen, who do you say that I am?

That question was a little tougher, and although Scripture doesn't say so, it probably got quiet for a second. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the disciples show that they thought Jesus was going to restore the kingdom of Israel and overthrow the occupying Romans. Certainly they knew Jesus was a great Teacher, and on countless occasions He had shown Himself to be a miracle worker. But this question, "Who do you think I am?" puts them on the spot. You can almost see the wheels spinning in their heads as they search for the right words. Then Peter, the disciple who often speaks first and thinks later, rightly responds with the Spirit-given reply: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." I think Jesus would have had to smile at that answer. Although Peter did not understand the full impact of his words quite yet, he had gotten it right.

For the first time in the Gospel, Jesus is acknowledged as who he is. Others had given partial answers. The disciples had been amazed earlier when Jesus calmed the storm, but this confession doesn't come out of amazement at a miracle. It comes out of the time spent following and learning from Jesus. It comes from hearing his words and seeing his miracles. But most of all, it comes from God.

Peter could not have come up with the correct answer on his own. Through hearing the words of Jesus, the Holy Spirit worked to create the faith in him that came out in that confession. The same Holy Spirit works to create faith in us, too, through the words of Jesus, through learning about Jesus from our family and friends, and through Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

The most important question in this exchange is "Who do you say that I am?" It's one thing to know about what happens in general. It's another to make it personal. It's one thing to know what the crowds who have only heard bits and pieces of Jesus' teaching, who have heard rumors of what he said and did, thought of Jesus. It's another thing for Jesus to ask the disciples, the ones who have been following him, learning from him, watching him, seeing him, believing in him.

That's the question for us, too. Who do you say Jesus is? It's easy to talk about Jesus in abstract terms. But who do you say that he is?

When it all comes down to it, we're left with a decision CS Lewis described as deciding if Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. Either Jesus was who he said he was—and who Peter said he was—or he must be rejected and denied as crazy or a crook. Lewis writes:

"I am here trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be

God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic-on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg-or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any of that patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. Nor did he intend to.”

If you’re here on a Sunday morning, you’ve probably already made up your mind. If you haven’t, though, I pray the same Spirit who worked faith in Peter works faith in you, so you can confess, say the same thing, that we do, that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, who came into the world to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world, to die for you and me.

Third Article and Explanation:

Interest Surveys:

Sharing Our Ministry:

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord, in Your mercy;

C: hear our prayer.

Lord’s Prayer:

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*Shout to the Lord*” (on screen)

Postlude: